

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED

In the CHURCH of St. *Andrew*,
PLYMOUTH,

A T T H E

Archdeacon's Visitation,

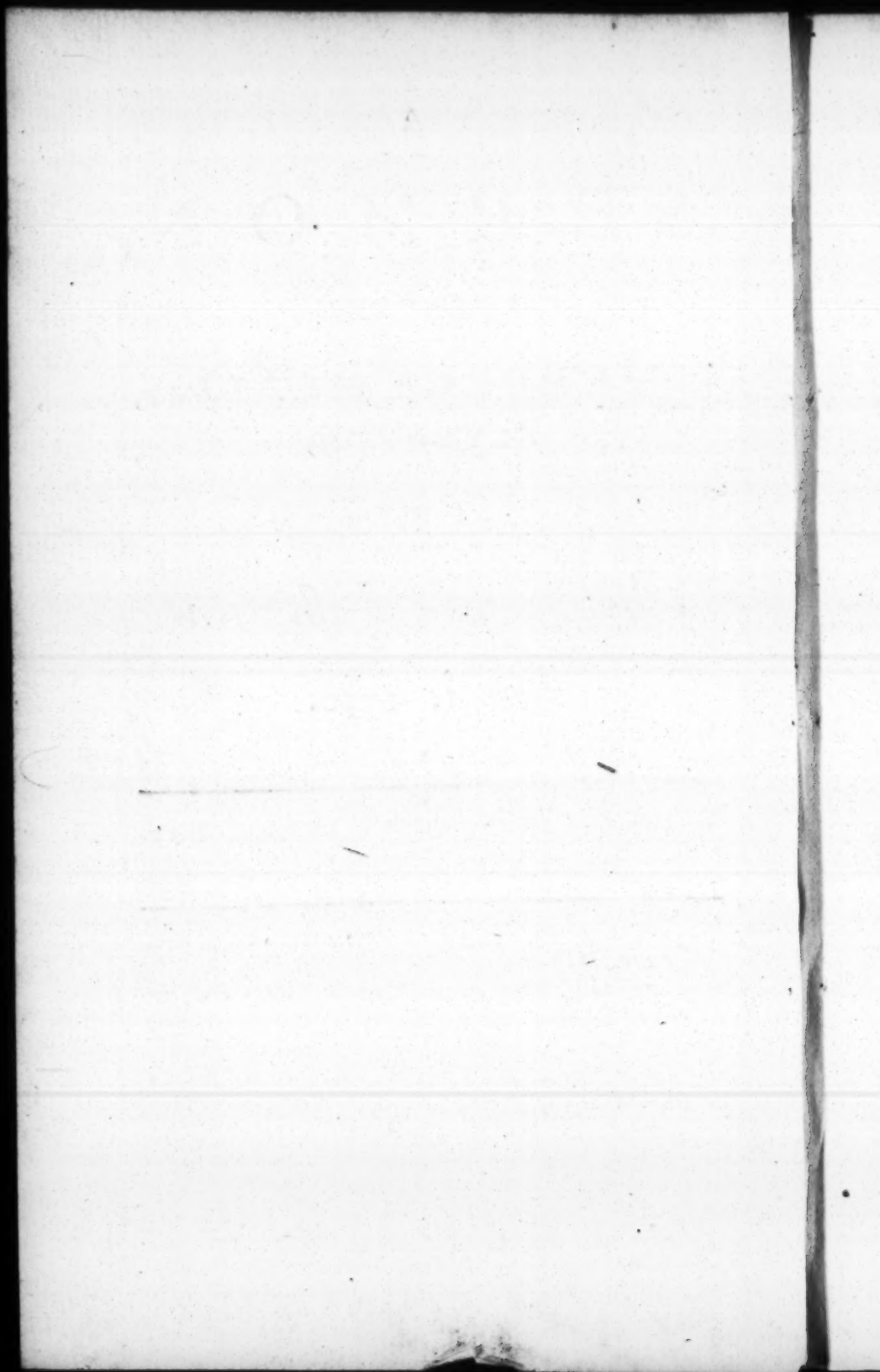
June 1, 1750.

By THOMAS VIVIAN, Vicar of *Corn-*
wood, DEVON.

I have set Watchmen upon thy Wall, O Jerusa-
lem, which shall never hold their Peace Day or
Night: Ye that make mention of the Lord keep
not silence and give him no Rest, till he establish,
and till he make Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth
Isaiah, lx. 2, 6, 7.

B E L F A S T :

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To the Reverend

MR. GEORGE BAKER,

Archdeacon of TOTNESS.

And the other Rev. Ministers before
whom this Sermon was preached.

Reverend Sirs,

I BEG leave to present you a very
plain Discourse, upon a very impor-
tant Subject: Which the earnest
Requests, and repeated Sollicitations of
many of those that heard it, have at
length prevailed upon me to make pub-
blick.

I hope you will not, because of the
artless unadorned Manner in which it
is wrote, look upon me, as undertaking
to dictate to those, from whom, as it is
my Duty, I should be glad to learn.
My View was to deliver my own Soul,
by using the Opportunity my Office sup-
plied

plied me with, of speaking some necessary Points plainly and freely.

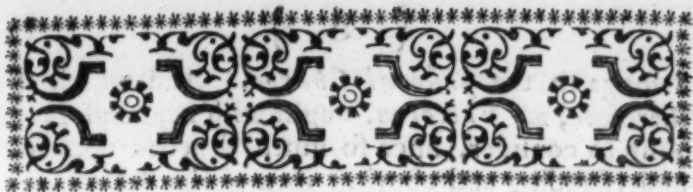
That the God of all Grace may deeply imprint upon all our Hearts, these, and the like Considerations, so as to enable us to live and act suitable to them, is the earnest Prayer, of

Your affectionate Brother,

And Servant for Christ's Sake,

THOMAS VIVIAN.

Cornwood, Dec. 27th,
1750.



J O H N xxi. 17.

Jesus saith unto him, Feed my Sheep.

THE particular Solemnity, with which our blessed Lord commits to St. *Peter* in this Place, the important Trust of *feeding his Flock*, is one of those Arguments upon which the Papists build the Authority of the Church, and the universal Supremacy of its Head.

But besides the great Difficulty (or rather Impossibility) they lie under, of proving that St. *Peter* was ever Bishop of *Rome*, or if he was, that his Authority was to descend in its full Latitude to all his Successors.—It does not appear from this (nor indeed any other) Passage, that he had any extraordinary Commission or Authority above the other Apostles: This being no more than a solemn Confirmation of the Charge before committed to them all*.

We should therefore consider these Words as not belonging to him only, or to all the Apostles, but as applicable to every Minister of Christ. Every one, to whom is committed the Care of Souls, may consider the Lord Jesus thus speaking to him: *Feed my Lambs: Feed my Sheep: Feed my Sheep.* Words, which as they should strike us with a reverential Awe, on account of the Person who speaks them, so should they employ our deep Meditation on account of their extensive Sense, as including whatsoever

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belongs

* *Mat.* xxviii. 19.

belongs to the *pastoral Charge*. And which *We* therefore, *my Brethren*, ought with Fear and Trembling to consider, since so much depends upon our understanding and obeying them ; the Salvation of our own Souls, and, in a great measure, that of those that are committed to us ; whose Blood will be required at our Hands, if they perish thro' our ill Conduct or Neglect.

It will therefore, I apprehend, be very suitable both to the End of our present assembling, and to the Office I bear *, to call to your Remembrance your great and important Trust. But this being a Subject very copious and extensive, I shall insist only upon such Particulars, as are either most important in themselves, or most frequently neglected ; and that under the following Heads.

I. The *necessary Qualifications* of those that are to be admitted to the *Ministry*.

II. The *particular Duties* belonging to the Office.

III. An *exemplary Life and Conversation*.

I shall, lastly, apply what has been said.

I. With regard to the first of these, it is above all Things necessary, that he that is admitted to the Ministry, be himself a *Child of God*.

By being a Child of God, I do not mean only that he be baptized, or even that his Life be free from gross Corruptions ; this is but a small Part of what is included in the Scripture Phrases, *Born again* †, *Begotten of God* ‡.

To be entitled to these high Appellations it is necessary, that he be one that has been deeply *convinced of sin* : That he has seen and felt the Corruptions of his own Heart, as well as the Irregularities of his Life ; one, who pierced with a holy Grief

* As rural Dean. † *John* iii. 3. ‡ *1 John* v. 18.

Grief and penitential Sorrow, despairing to be saved by his own Righteousness, and directed by the Light of the Gospel, has sought the *Lamb of God*, and in him found Rest to his weary heavy laden Soul: Who being justified by Faith has Peace with God, || having received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he can now cry, *Abba Father*. The Spirit itself bearing witness with his Spirit that he is a Child of God †.

He must be one, who as a further Evidence of his Interest in Christ, has the Testimony of a good Conscience ‡, void of Offence towards God and towards Man §. Who experiences the Power of Sin gradually declining in him, and can rejoice in being translated from *Darkness into Light* ^a, from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God ^b; and can truly say that he (his former self) no longer lives, but Christ liveth in him; and the Life which he now liveth in the Flesh, he liveth by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him ^c. Who, by that Faith which is of the Operation of God ^d, hath in some degree at least, overcome the World ^e, mortified his Members that are upon the Earth ^f, and trod down Satan under his Feet ^g.

One, who (finally) having the Love of God shed abroad in his Heart ^h, rejoices to draw near unto his heavenly Father, in his appointed Ways; and delights in Prayer and Praise, and holy Meditation, Duties for which before he had no relish; but now his Heart being enlarged, he can gladly run the Way of God's Commandments ⁱ, which are no longer grievous ^k. He hath learned to love all Men, to be meek and lowly in Heart ^l, and is warmed with
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|| Rom. v. 1. † Rom. viii. 15, 16. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 12. § Acts xxiv. 16. ^a 1 Pet. ii. 9. ^b Rom. viii. 21. ^c Gal. ii. 20. ^d Gal. ii. 12. ^e 1 John v. 4. ^f Col. iii. 5. ^g Rom. xvi. 20. ^h Rom. viii. 5. ⁱ Ps. cxix. 32. ^k 1 John v. 3. ^l Mat. xi. 29.

a prudent Zeal for the Glory of God and the Salvation of immortal Souls ; seeking continually by a pure Heart, to draw nearer and nearer to *the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ* *.

These are the Marks and Characters which the Scripture (the only sure Rule) gives us of a *Child of God*. And whatsoever is thus *born of God*, and *conformed to the Image of his Son* †, hath in himself one of the most necessary Qualifications of a successful Dispenser of the Gospel of *Christ* : But without this no Man (whatever his other Qualifications be) will be *able*, nor indeed *willing*, faithfully to discharge this important Trust.

He will not be able for want of Knowledge ; for *the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* §. They are Mysteries made known to those only that love and fear the Lord, and have thereby their Understanding enlighten'd. So that be a Man ever so learned, though he be thoroughly acquainted with Books ; yet if he be a stranger to the *Power of Godliness* in his own Soul —The Scriptures (with regard to their *spiritual Sense*, whereby they become the Means of *Spirit and Life* ‡) will still be a dead Letter to him, wrap'd up in Clouds and thick Darknes.

If any one does not conceive how this can be, it may be made more intelligible by observing that this is the Case in other Things. Different Books, and different Conversation, suit different Persons, and what appears charming and instructive to one, is dull and disagreeable to another. The Reason of which is this : In order to please and profit, there must not only be a real Worth in the Object itself, but a correspondent Suitableness in the Receiver. For want of this, Musick seems harsh to a bad Ear, and the finest Thread of Reasoning appears Nonsense to the unlearned. Just so in the present Case, he
that

* *Eph. iv. 13.* † *Rom. viii. 29.* § *I Cor. ii. 14.*
‡ *John vi. 63.*

that hath not his Senses exercised to discern spiritual Things, (tho' he may be very knowing and quick of Apprehension in other Matters) for want of this Discernment, and a correspondent Experience in his own Soul, will either form wrong Notions, or have no Conception of many Gospel Truths, which are plain even to a babe in *Christ*.

And as such a Person cannot understand the Word of *God*, so neither will he be able to judge of the State of those Souls who desire his Advice and Direction.——A poor Physician indeed, that neither knows the Powers and Qualities of the Medicines he is to use, nor the Nature of the Diseases he is to cure.

If one come to him weary and heavy laden with the Burden of his Sins, in whom *the Arrows of the Lord stick fast, and his Hand presseth him sore**; Whose Lamentation is, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death † ?* Who enquires *what must I do to be saved ‡ ?*—Notwithstanding these are the Scripture Marks of an awakened Conscience, convinced of Sin by the Power of the *Holy Ghost*; yet instead of pointing out to such an one *the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World, the Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the Propitiation for our sins* ||. Being himself a stranger to any such Convictions, he will in all probability think him mad, and at best recommend trifling Company, and idle Amusements; so to banish those serious Thoughts, and stifle the Work of God in its Beginning.

If a *Believer* desires to be more clearly instructed in the Nature of saving Faith, to have some doubts and Difficulties removed, and receive farther Light relating to the Scripture Marks of our new Birth—How can he teach others, who at best can have but very

* *Psal.* xxviii. 2. † *Rom.* vii. 24. ‡ *Acts* xvi. 30. || *John* i. 29.

very confused Notions of these things himself? A *Believer* might say, *we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen* * : But another hath neither known nor seen ; how then can he speak ? it is more probable that making his own Experience (or rather his no Experience) the Standard instead of God's Word, he will turn the *Lame out of the Way*. Tho' we are commanded to *examine ourselves whether we be in the Faith*, since *Believers* (such as are not *reprobate* or *disapproved*) may know that Jesus Christ is in them §——He will probably maintain that such a Trial is in vain and fruitless, and that we cannot know that Christ dwells in us by his Spirit, or we in him by Faith.

So unable will he be to deal with Souls in private, and his publick Performances must be suitable. “ Cold and lifeless (as that great and good Man Archbishop *Leighton* observes) “ tho' never so fine “ and well contrived must those Discourses be that “ are of an unknown *Christ*.” And therefore (as he farther farther speaks) “ As a due Furniture of Learning is very requisite for this Employment, so “ it is not sufficient. When one is duly enriched “ that Way, there is yet one Thing wanting that “ grows not in Schools. Except this *infused Wisdom* from above, season and sanctify all other Endowments, they remain common and unholy, “ and therefore not fit for the Sanctuary ‡.”

Nor will he that is a stranger to the Power of God-lies in his own Soul, be more willing, than able, to promote the Salvation of others. We cannot have a true Zeal for *God's* Glory, till his *Love is shed abroad in our Hearts* || ; nor shall we be hearty in pressing others to be united to *Jesus Christ*, till we are ourselves partakers of that Redemption that is *through Faith in his Blood* †, at least till we are so deeply convinced of the Necessity of obtaining this

* 1 *John* ii. 1. § *John* iii. 11. 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5.
† *Ser.* I. || *Rom.* v. 5. † *Rom.* iii. 25.

this invaluable Privilege, as to seek and desire it infinitely above all earthly things. Till then a Man can have little hopes of Success in the Ministry; nor indeed, will he much expect or desire it. For being himself not escaped from the Power of Sin, nor even heartily desirous to be so; but remaining in a state of Bondage to him *that worketh in the Children of Disobedience* *——He will not——cannot sincerely oppose, but rather (as much as decently he may) promote his Master's Kingdom: especially by deluding Souls into a false Rest, *saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace* §, not like a true Watchman awakeing, but lulling Men asleep.

And with regard to that part of his Duty which he is obliged to, how tedious will it be? How heartless must he be in it, when he is not filled with Love to him he serves? How will the painful Work be hurried over? At first, perhaps, some faint Desires of doing Good (if not a worse Motive, Novelty, or a vain Desire to please Men) may cause a little Care and Diligence; but disappointed of Success (the Cause of which he does not suspect to be in himself) how tired will he grow even of this poor *Cura Animarum* †, and glad (if it may be so) to be entirely excused, and leave the painful Drudgery to others.

2. A second necessary Qualification for the Ministry is, that we be properly called to it.

The Ministers of the Gospel are by the Apostle called *Ambassadors* ‡. They are sent forth to proclaim the glad Tydings of Salvation to Sinners, and to pray them in *Christ's* stead to be reconciled to God ||.

Now the Authority of an Ambassador depends upon his being commissioned by his Master, and sent forth in his Name: without which he dare not take upon him the Office.

Accordingly we find the first Preachers of the Gospel

* Eph. ii. 2. § Jer. vi. 14. † Care of Souls.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 20. || *ibid.*

Gospel referring to the *Divine Appointment*, as that which both *authorised* and *obliged* them to undertake the Ministry. *A Dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me* † *saith St. Paul*, and by whom? *Not by Man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead* *. Agreeable to which are our Lords own Words: *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you* ||. And it is the standing Rule, *No Man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron* ‡.

On the other Hand, the Want of being called of God, is one of the distinguishing Marks of false Prophets: *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran, I have not spoken to them, yet they Prophesied* §. And the punishment of their Crimes is, *By Sword and Famine shall these Prophets be consumed* ¶.

And if any one imagine that there is not now the same necessity of being thus called of God, that there was in former Ages, the Wisdom of our own Church will teach him better; the first Question put to those that are to be ordained being this, “Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this Office and Ministry?” Plainly implying that the Motion must come from God himself; without which the being sent forth by the Governors of the Church (they not being able to know the Heart, and in this Case being imposed upon by false Pretences) cannot give sufficient Authority in the Sight of God. And therefore if we have not this *internal*, as well as an *external* Call, we shall still be, by him considered, as *Thieves and Robbers, that entered not by the Door* (i. e. Christ) *into the Sheepfold, but climbed up some other way* †.

The

† 1 Cor. ix. 17. * Gal. i. 1. || John xv. 16.
‡ Heb. v. 4. § Jer. xxiii. 21. ¶ Jer. xiv. 15. ^a Ordination of Deacons. † John x. 7. ‡ John x. 1.

The only Difficulty is, what we are to understand by being *called of God, and moved by the Holy Ghost*; and how are we to judge whether we are thus called or not? But even here, had not others erred before us, it would be much easier for a sincere Heart, that is taught of *God* the Knowledge of spiritual Things, to hit, than miss the Truth.

These Expressions certainly imply, at least, an inward Persuasion (not arising from any external Views and Considerations) and a clear and strong Conviction (sometimes in Opposition to other Determinations and a former Bent) that it is *God's Will* we should take upon us the Ministry: which Persuasion is not a groundless enthusiastical Imagination, but attended with such other Circumstances and Reasons, as altogether are sufficient to convince ourselves and others too (that are candid and impartial) of the Reality of our Call. I mean, a good Measure of those other Qualifications, which are either necessary or expedient, for those that take upon them this most solemn and important Trust.

3. These are, a good Understanding and sound Judgment; especially, a Discernment in spiritual things, founded upon Experience, and sensible *Knowledge* of the Things of which we speak: A Heart filled with Zeal for God, and the Salvation of Souls; a Desire *to spend and to be spent* § in the Service which we seek, not for the Wages, but for the Work's sake: And a Conversation suitable, holy and harmless, and abounding in *the Work of the Lord* ||, and the Labour of Love *.

To these we may add, as highly *expedient*, a general Knowledge of Men and Things; a competent Share of human Learning, and a free Elocution; of which, the more a Minister has the better, provided they be sanctified by Grace, and made subservient to worthy Ends, otherwise they will be of no Use, nay will rather be very hurtful: As they will dispose us

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to be ravenous Wolves, rather than faithful Shepherds; incline and qualify us to *devour*, rather than *feed* the Flock of *Christ*.

If we come to the Ministry with these Qualifications, we shall find some Pleasure even in the hardest Part of it. We shall reap some Comfort even while we sow the seed, and have the strongest Reasons to hope to see of the travel of our soul, if thus prepared, and looking continually unto God, from whom is all our Sufficiency, we conscientiously strive to discharge the *particular Duties* belonging to our Office. What these are, comes in the second Place to be considered. And,

1. The most usual Means of *awaking Sinners*, as well as of building *up Believers*, is the *preaching* of the Word.

This is that *Sword of the Spirit* † which is *quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow* ‡. When rightly managed it separateth between a Sinner and his most beloved Lusts, divorces him from that which was as dear as his right Eye, brings him off from every Idol to *serve the living and true God*, and seek above all Things the Redemption that is in *Jesus Christ*.

But the preaching of the Gospel becomes thus *the Power of God unto Salvation* *, not by any Virtue or Efficacy in itself, but only as it is a Means God uses to this End: The Letter itself profiteth nothing, *It is the Spirit that quickneth* §; upon whose Operation therefore we are to depend, as he that in this Case worketh all in all.

However, tho' the Means have no *Sufficiency* in themselves, yet ought they to be proper and suitable to the End proposed: And therefore our Preaching should not be with *enticing Words of Man's Wisdom* || (which would be *corrupting the Word of God*

† *Eph. vi. 17.* ‡ *Heb. iv. 12.* * *Rom. i. 16.*
§ *John vi. 63.* || *I Cor. ii. 4.*

God) § but in great Simplicity and Plainness of Speech opening the Mysteries of Godliness, and the Methods of Grace, and enforcing and applying the same in such a manner, as a full and zealous Heart will readily suggest. But especially depending upon Almighty God to make all effectual, *by the Demonstration of the Spirit* ||, enlightening the Understanding to receive, and inclining the Heart to embrace the important Truths.

And let us always take Care that our Discourses be such as become *Gospel Preachers*, carefully avoiding those vague and loose Strains of *unscriptural Divinity*, of which we have too many Instances even amongst the Writers of Credit in the present Age: Who confound *Law* and *Gospel* together, making such Medly of heathen Morality, and Christian Doctrines, as perplex the Hearers. These by their slight manner of passing over the most important Points, have (whether they intended it or not) caused many to look upon Christianity itself, as little more than a refined System of moral Philosophy.

To avoid this, the Doctrines peculiarly *evangelical* should be clearly opened and strongly enforced, especially in the following Particulars.

As *Repentance towards God* must proceed *saving Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* ‡, as Men must be made sensible of their wretched fallen State before they will be inclined to look out for a Remedy—— In awakening them to a Sense of their sinful State, *The Ax must be laid to the Root of the Tree* †. We must not only so preach the Law, that Men may thereby discover the Irregularities of their Lives, their outward actual Sins—but, according to our Lord's Example *, we must shew the Length and Breadth of the Law, its spiritual Sense and extensive Meaning, that Men may see how utterly they are polluted, that *even their Mind and Conscience is defiled* ¶. That

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when

§ 2 Cor. ii. 17. || 1 Cor. ii. 4. ‡ Acts xx. 21.
† Mat. iii. 10. * Mat. v. 21, &c. ¶ Tit. i. 15.

when their Hands are innocent they offend in Word, and even in Thought ; by the Adultery of the Eye, and the Murder of the Heart.

And farther, the Source of all our Pollutions must be opened, our original Guilt and Sin, being *by Nature* born in Sin, and *Children of Wrath* ||.—A Truth which those are usually most offended with, that by their being thus offended, are themselves evident Proofs and Examples of it.—A Truth upon which the whole Christian Dispensation is founded, and accordingly abundantly taught in the Holy Scriptures. And to which every Minister of our Church hath subscribed ; declaring it to be his Persuasion : That “ original Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam* ; “ as the Pelagians do vainly talk ; but it is the Fault “ and Corruption of the Nature of every Man, that “ naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam*, “ whereby Man is very far gone from original Righteousness, and is of his own Nature inclined to “ Evil, so that the Flesh lusteth always contrary to “ the Spirit ; and therefore in every Person born into this World it deserveth God’s Wrath and Damnation §.”

When by this Men are deeply wounded with a Sense of Guilt, when they are *convinced of Sin*, and the fatal Consequences of unpardoned Offences, then will the preaching of the *Gospel*, *glad Tidings of Salvation* through *Christ*, be seasonable. Those that feel their Disease will gladly listen to the Offer of a Remedy. The *weary and heavy laden* † will be glad to hear of a *Saviour*, the *Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World* *.

Then will that great Article of Christianity, Justification through Faith, Salvation freely offered, be sweet and comfortable to those who know their Wants, are unbottomed from Self-Confidence, and no longer trust to any Righteousness or Power of their own.

And

|| *Eph.* ii. 3. § *Acts* ix. † *Mat.* xi. 28. * *John* i. 29.

And this is the time for Ministers to be the Messengers of Peace, and *bind up the broken hearted* †, to call unto Sinners in the Words of the Prophet, *Ho! every one that thirsteth come to the Waters* ‡, to take up the Invitation of our Lord, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest*. To drop into their bleeding Wounds that healing Balsom of the Apostle, *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins* ||. And because such is the Greatness and Excellency of *Faith*, that by it alone we are justified before GOD, because this is the Point that chiefly distinguishes the Gospel from the Law, and the Reformed from the papal Churches—We should be very careful and particular in opening the Nature of *saving Faith*, that those that hear us may not err in so important a Point; and mistake a dead *hissorical Faith* for that which is lively and saving. To prevent which we should frequently describe it by its *Preparatives*, *Repentance towards God*, deep Convictions of Sin, and an humbling Sense of the Want of a Saviour. By its *saving Act*, receiving Jesus Christ, as he is offered in the Gospel, as our *Wisdom, Righteousness, Satisfaction, and Redemption*, †, calling ourselves upon him, and cleaving unto him with our whole Heart, and by its *Effects*—*Within the Believer Peace, Love, and Joy in the Holy Ghost**, and in his Conduct, dying unto Sin and living unto Righteousness.

When St. Paul preached these Doctrines of Grace, some men started that Objection which since hath been very common, *do we not make void the Law thro' Faith* ‡? Imagining that if *by the Works of the Law no Man shall be justified* §, if the forsaking Sin, and doing good Works, cannot procure

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† *Isaiab lxi. 1.* ‡ *Isaiab li. 1.* || *I John ii. 1.*
 † *I Cor. i. 30.* * *Rom. v. 1, 11.* † *Rom. iii. 32.*
 § *Gal. ii. 26.*

Forgiveness, then they might as well sit still, and that now there was no Place for good Works, nor any need of them.

He that knoweth by Experience what Faith is, will hardly be tempted to entertain such a vain Thought, but to prevent the Cavil altogether it will be needful to explain the Use and Necessity of good Works, and shew their proper Place and order according to the excellent Pattern set us in the 12th and 13th Articles of our Church.

Indeed the Generality of Preachers are not so defective in enforcing the necessity of moral duties, but too many in doing this, do as it were, shoot at random. Calling Men to the Practice of good Works, but not teaching to what end: whether in order to be justified (by them, which is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, if it be not too gross even for them) or as the proper and necessary Fruits of Faith in them that are justified, as is taught by our own, and the reformed Churches in general.

In explaining this point, therefore, we should be cautious on the one Hand, to shew the utter Insufficiency of our best Works to Justification, and yet on the other, to prove that *the Law was holy and just, and good* || *if a man use it lawfully* †, and useful for different Ends, according to the different Circumstances of the Hearers. To the unawakened it is useful as a *School-master to bring them to Christ* ‡. They being hereby check'd and humbled so as to see their sins, discover the Impossibility they lye under of being saved by fulfilling the Law, and be convinced how necessary it is for them, (being shut up and debarred from every other Method of *fleeing from the wrath to come*) to fly unto *Jesus* to be saved by *Grace*. To those that *seek the Lord* under *Convictions* of sin, the Law is a proper test of the reality of their repentance, by the regard

|| *Rom. vii. 12.* † *1 Tim i. 8.* ‡ *Gal. iii. 24.*

gard they shew to its commands, and farther, it beats down and bruises them more and more by its rigour and threatned wrath, so as to make Peace, and believing more welcome and more diligently fought. *To those that are passed from death unto life ¶*, tho' the Law could not justify their Persons, yet it justifies their Faith, by shewing it to be of the right sort *, lively, *working by love*, and fruitful of good Works §.

That our preaching may be blessed with Success, it is farther necessary that we endeavour as much as possible, to humble the Heart of Man, by Nature proud, and puffed up with an Opinion of his own strength. In order to this we must put our Hearers constantly in mind that *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy †*. That it is he alone that *worketh in us both to will and to do ‡*: That we cannot call *Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost ||*: That it is he that enlightneth our understanding, to see our wants when lost in *Darkness and the shadow of death ¶¶*: That Faith whereby we are saved is his Gift: That it is he that *quickneth us when dead in trespasses and sins ***. Takes off the load of guilt, and by his Holy Inspiration sanctifies our souls, so as to render them *meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the saints in light §§*. And gives us here the *Seal and Earnest of that Inheritance in our Hearts ††*.

To what has been said on this point, I shall only add, that it were much to be wished the Pattern we copy after were chiefly the holy Scriptures, and that not only in the Doctrines themselves, but also in the Expressions in which they are delivered. *Adapting spiritual Words to spiritual Things ‡‡*,
using

¶ I John iii. 14. * *Fides sola justificat, sed fides quæ sola non justificat.* § Gal. v. 6. † Rom. ix. 16. ‡ Phil. ii. || 1 Cor. xii. 3. ¶¶ Job xxviii. 3. ** Eph. ii. 1. §§ Col. i. 12. †† 2 Cor. i. 22. ‡‡ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

using those Phrases which the *Holy Ghost* teacheth as most expressive of his meaning. This caution is the more necessary because some Men seem ashamed of Scripture words, and put others in their Stead, as more modish, tho' far less proper and expressive. For instance, the change wrought in Believers, is in the Scriptures called, being born of God, † and renewed in the Spirit of our minds, § by Justification † i. e. Forgiveness of Sins and Sanctification, i. e. inward Holiness, thro' the Grace of God *, and the Operation of the *Holy Ghost* † and the manner of his Operation is expressed by *Inspiration* §, *quickning* ||, *enlightning* ||||, *purifying* ! ††.

But by many these Words are entirely dropt, which gives great Reason to suspect that the Thing signified by them is not believed. And the weak flat expressions put in their stead, such as being reformed, become good, &c. as well as the ambiguous Phrases of *sincere Endeavours* and *good Resolutions*, mentioned by some as *Terms of Acceptance*; are strong Arguments that their *Notions* as well as their Words are unscriptural:

2. Besides that which is peculiarly distinguished by the Name of *Preaching*, another Method of Instruction is expounding the Scriptures.

The written word of God being the only infallible Rule of Faith and Practice, it should be the constant Endeavour of Ministers to make it as clear and intelligible as possible. That Men may judge for themselves, see, and know what foundation they rest on, and *be able to give a reason of the hope that is in them* †.

By Preaching we explain and apply some particular points, such as appear most suitable to the Circumstances of those to whom we speak: Which is

† *John* i. 13. § *Eph.* vi. 23. † *1 Cor.* vi. 11.
 * *1 Cor.* xv. 13. † *1 Cor.* vi. 11. § *Job* xxxii. 8.
 || *Eph.* ii. 1. |||| *Heb.* vi. 4. †† *Tit.* ii. 14.
 † *1 Pet.* iii. 15.

is as it were, drawing forth streams to refresh and fertilize their Hearts. By plain and apt Exposition, we open the fountain itself, and have thereby as proper an Opportunity to give *Light*, as by the other to awaken and give *Heat*: Tho' even here we may by short and pertinent Digressions, apply General Truths to particular wants.

This method of teaching our Lord himself used, as is recorded *Luke* iv. 17. And in his Discourse with the two Disciples going to *Emmaus* *. In this manner *Philip* opened the Scripture to the *Eunuch* †. And if we may judge of the manner of teaching used by some of the *Fathers* §, by those discourses that remain, it was chiefly expounding the Scriptures. And in this the Ministers of the two Churches in this place, have set us a good Example, by their Exposition of the Epistle and Gospel on Holy-days, by which they have an Opportunity of opening those chosen Parts of Scripture, and at the same time explaining the right use of the Festivals. If we have the matter at heart we may take the same or more frequent Opportunities (according to the circumstances and employments of those that are committed to our care) of opening these and other Scriptures, so as to make them be more effectually what they were designed for; Light to them that sit in darkness, food to the hungry, and refreshment to the weary Soul.

3. The two Methods of Instruction already mentioned are of a more general Nature. But we must endeavour in our Applications to be as particular as is possible, and is consistent with Prudence. To this end *occasional Exhortation* might be useful, by which I mean a free Address suited to particular Persons and Seasons.

Sometimes our Hearers may be chiefly *Believers*, at least such as are *really Concerned* about Salvation,

* *Luke* xxiv. 27. † *Acts* viii. 35. § *Origen, Basil, Augustin.*

op. At others, (I fear most commonly) they may be such as *have the Form of Godliness, but deny the power thereof* †, or perhaps have neither Form nor Power; to these different Persons therefore, we should use a different Exhortation.

There are again particular *Times*, at which we may catch the Opportunity and speak a *word in season* *, such as the Celebration of *Baptism*, and Preparation for the *Lord's Supper*. When we may point out the abuses of these solemn Ordinances, observe the impiety of such abuses, and shew the right use and improvement of them. Besides these the burial of the dead, and Days of Fasting or rejoicing; all supply Opportunities, which a well disposed Mind will gladly embrace, of speaking a few suitable Words, and *fastning a Nail in a sure place* ‡.

4. These Parts of our Ministry are of a publick Nature: But it is the duty of good Shepherds, not only to watch over their own Flock in general, but every Sheep in particular, and carefully to supply their wants. This shews the Necessity of private Visitation, “and that not only to the sick, but
“to the whole ||, since those that are whole in
“body may be sick in Soul, and therefore want
“our help as much as the others.”

And this is as important, and perhaps as difficult as any part of the ministerial Office, and requires as great a Measure both of boldness and discretion.

To seek and find those that are *lost*, to bring back those that are going *astray*, to search for those that begin to *awake* from their Sleep of sin, and encourage them; to find them that need *Comfort*, and administer it; to shew the Terrors of the Lord to the Impenitent in private Conversation, with so much clearness and boldness, as to deliver our own Souls, and yet so mildly as not to lay a stumbling

† 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. * *Isa.* l. 4. ‡ *Isa.* xxii. 25
|| *Or. Ser.*

stumbling Block in the way; to pull off the Mask from the *Self-deceiver*, so as to convince him of his Hypocrisy, and the Deceitfulness of his own heart; shew him his guilt and lost Estate clearly, and yet so tenderly, as that he may not be tempted to despair, nor turn and rent you thro' Indignation; to enter into an house where your Company (at least such a Subject as you come with) is disagreeable, and yet so you open your Message as both to make a proper Impression, and excite a Desire of hearing you again, to renew the same Attempt with courage, after frequent disappointments and little or no Success — *Hic labor hoc opus est* — This is properly speaking *the care of Souls*, this is to watch *as those that must give Account* †. These Things, so difficult, and yet so indispensably our duty, are enough to make us all cry out — *Who is Sufficient for these Things* * ?

But that we faint not, let us remember that our *Sufficiency is of God* ‡. Who, if there be a willing Mind, will both accept and improve it, if we be not unfaithful, nor neglect to stir up the *Gift if God that is already in us* §.

It would be an excellent Improvement of this Article of *private Visitation*, if we not only watched over those that are committed to us ourselves, but put them in a way of being useful to one another: By watching over each other in love. Observing each others Conduct, and by mutual Reproof and Advice, and assembling together for *religious Conference, building up each other in their most holy Faith* ||, and admonishing one another in *Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs*, according to the Apostle's Directions †.

Sinners encourage one another in Wickedness by frequently meeting together, and by talking and singing.

† Heb. xiii. 17. * 2 Cor. ii. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.
§ 2 Tim. i. 6. || Jude 20. † Col. iii. 16.

singing lewdly and prophanely. And why may not the Servants of God instruct, encourage, and warn each other by pious Discourse, while a mutual Declaration of their Soul's State might supply Matter, and give each an Opportunity of seeing and knowing his own heart more clearly? By this means too, they would be enabled most profitably and effectually to comply with that other Rule, of *confessing their faults one to another, and praying one for another, that they may be healed* †. At the same time that they joined their Hearts and Voices together, in the heavenly Employment of praising God.

And indeed whenever any considerable Work of Grace is wrought in many Hearts, they will naturally unite together. Thus the Prophet *Malachi* speaking of those *that feared the Lord* in his Time, says that they spoke often one to another. And how acceptable was this to God? They shall be mine, saith the *Lord of Hosts, in that Day when I make up my Jewels* *. In the same manner we find the first Believers frequently assembled for mutual converse, Prayer and Praise, tho' Satan then (as he always will) was stirring up his Servants to deprive them of these blessed Opportunities.

By this Means a strict Union is maintained betwixt the Members of Christ's Body, which otherwise would be as it were disjointed, and have no Connection one with another. By this means, when at home and in private, Men are used to talk of the Things of God, and encourage each other, whatever good Impression is made by publick discourses or otherwise is renewed, and the Effect not hindered by the cares of the World and other Temptations; whereas otherwise, Men are apt to be forgetful *Hearers of the Word, and not doers, like unto a Man beholding his natural Face in a Glass*: For tho' they behold themselves, *i. e.* see their

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† *James* v. 16. * *Mal.* iii. 16.

own State described exactly, yet *they go their way, and straightway forget what manner of Men they were* †.

The most regular, and on many Accounts, the most desirable Method of doing this, would be constant and devout Family Worship, when every Master of a Family led the Way of making his House a House of Prayer and affectionate Praise, and searched into the State of every Soul under his Roof. But when either he or his Family, have no real deep concern about Salvation, this cannot be done but in a dead formal manner, *doing Honour unto God with their Lips, while their Heart is far from him* *. And therefore those that have clear Convictions of Sin, or *have tasted the good word of God, and the Powers of the world to come* ‡, will naturally seek for others whose Experiences resembles their own, to converse, and pray, and praise the Lord together.

5. Besides the Duty of *feeding Christ's Sheep*, he commands his Shepherds also to feed his Lambs §, (and which is remarkable) first his Lambs. Which as it is an Expression of greater Tenderness, and may signify the weak and feeble Part of the Flock, and imply our conforming to his Example, who was himself to *gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young* ||; So it also may denote the younger part of our charge, the Care of whom is chiefly by Catechising.

This, according to the Import of the Word itself, is most effectually done by *Word of mouth*, Children being usually very inattentive to *set Discourses*, and remembring little of what is read to them. Therefore we must be careful to provide *Meat for Babes*, as well as *strong Meat* ¶ for Men: Adapting our instructions to their Capacities, and using

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those

† James i. 23, 24. * Mat. xv. 8. ‡ Heb. vi. 5.
§ John xxi. 15. || Isaiah xl. 11. ¶ Heb. v. 12.

those Methods that are most likely to prove effectual.

Our Church Catechism is an excellent Ground-work to this Purpose, if rightly used and improved; but if we content ourselves with teaching Children to repeat it by heart, without opening the Sense and meaning of it; it will be a sad sign that we do not delight in the Employment, and are not solicitous about the Success. For by this means they will reap no more benefit than if they were taught to repeat in a Language they do not understand.

Here therefore, must we especially give *Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line, here a little, and there a little*†. Teaching them the Sense of what they say, and seeing that they apprehend us, by making them give pertinent Answers to such other short Questions, relating to the same Matter, as are suited to their Understanding. To those that are grown up, some of those excellent Expositions that have been written may be useful. But especially must we ourselves use indefatigable Pains and Patience. And then we need not despair of seeing the Fruits of our Labours: Children being capable of greater Knowledge, and a more affecting Sense of the Things that relate to Salvation, than those that never made the Trial would expect. For tho' naturally inattentive to spiritual Things, yet when frequently and affectionately instilled, they will attend and form such Conceptions of what most concerns them, their Sinfulness and Wants, and the Fulness that is in *Christ* to supply them, as will prepare them for being profitable Hearers of the Word, when Age shall have enlarged their Capacities. Time will not permit me to dwell any longer on these particulars, and therefore I proceed to the

III.

† *Isaiah* xxviii. 10.

III. *Third Thing we purposed to speak of—
An Exemplary Life and Conversation.*

We observed before, that, if we come properly prepared to the Ministry, this will make the Duties of it easy and pleasant. And we may here add, that the same Dispositions will as naturally produce a good Life and Conversation, as a *good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit* *. So that such an one need not do violence to himself, in order to walk in a suitable Manner.

But to quicken us to greater Diligence, let us consider, that an exemplary Life is, what *we* in particular, have obliged ourselves to, by solemn Promise at our Ordination. This our Lord commands; this all Men, the bad as well as good, will expect; this, as we love our precious Souls, is our indispensable Duty.

Believers in general, and (I suppose) Ministers especially, are by our blessed Lord, called the *Salt of the Earth* ¶. That which should give Savour to other Things. *But if the Salt itself have lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted* ||? Ye are the *Light of the World* †, be not yourselves therefore covered with darkness, lest you draw ruin upon others as well as yourselves. Ye are a *City set upon a Hill* §, upon which all will have their Eyes, and nicely observe every part of your Conduct. Ye are the *Shepherds*, if therefore you yourselves become a Prey to the devouring Lion, and the Sheep be thereby scattered, their Souls also will be required at your Hands.

We therefore have a double Obligation to be always watchful, that our Conversation be agreeable to our holy Calling; and to this End we ought to abstain even from all appearance of evil †, providing honest Things, not only in the Sight of the Lord, but also in the Sight of Men §§. Some Things

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may

* *Mat. vii. 17.* ¶ *Mat. v. 13.* || *Mat. v. 13.*
† *ib. v. 14.* § *ib.* † *Theff. v. 22.* §§ *2 Cor. viii. 21.*

may be *lawful* in themselves, but for us *not expedient* †, lest we should thereby offend the Weak. And if so, how much more careful ought we to be in keeping clear of those things which are really sinful, or naturally leading to sin?

There are many Things which are countenanced by Custom, and pass for *innocent Amusements*, which whether innocent or no are utterly unbecoming a Gospel Minister. Of this Sort are all kinds of *Gaming*, spending hours in *drinking*, *merry meetings*, *trifling discourse*, and in general every Method of idling and destroying precious Time.

Perhaps some will be apt to say—Is a Minister then to use no Diverfions? No Amusements? To deny himself every innocent Pleasure?

If you mean such Pleasures as are just now mention'd, I should be sorry indeed to hear any of you ask the question, to find you stood in need of such poor things, and had nothing better to supply their place. To speak the softest, this is just as if grown Men should desire *Children's play*. Believers find greater Comforts and nobler Employments, which make them despise and disrelish these. But in Truth these things are not innocent, nor is there any excuse for those that use them: Seeing there are other things liable to no Exception, sufficient both for exercise of body and relaxation of mind.

I need hardly mention grosser Sins, such as *Uncleanness*, *drunkenness*, *prophaneness*, *falsehood*, *covetousness*, and the like. These Things should not be once *named* † among us. For if we be guilty of any of these things, all Men will conclude, and our own Consciences must confess, that however we may be called Ministers of *Christ*, we are really Servants of Satan, according to the general Rule, *his Servants ye are to whom ye obey* *.

2. But we must not content ourselves with being harmless and inoffensive. Our calling requires active

† 1 Cor. vi. 12. † Eph. v. 3. * Rom. vi. 16.

tive diligence and zeal. It is a *Warsfare* †, *labouring in a Vineyard* §, *running a Race* ¶. All which Expressions suggest unto us that much is to be done, as well as many Things to be left undone. We must therefore *use all diligence* ||, and labour to be fruitful, and *abounding in the work of the Lord* †.

A faithful Minister will be ready to do good unto all Men, to the utmost of his Power, spiritual and temporal Good. But especially will he look upon his *Parishioners*, the Flock peculiarly committed to his Charge, as standing in a near and tender relation to him. He will consider himself as concerned in whatever befalls any of them, and not only be ready himself to supply their Necessities, but stir up others to do it also. In sickness of the Body, and trouble of Mind, he will be at Hand, whether called or not, rejoicing to be the means of comfort and relief in either case.

Especially will he strive to be a Messenger of *peace*, and heal Divisions, if any arise among his Flock, that they may not destroy brotherly love, hinder their prayers, and so make all his other endeavours, and all the Ordinances of God, and means of Grace vain and fruitless.

To this end, it would probably be a very effectual Method, and make our Interposition more acceptable, if we kept ourselves as much as possible free from all party matters: Leaving Politicks to those whose Business they are. Always, however, doing our utmost to enforce obedience to the *Powers that be*, and praying for them, and a blessing upon their endeavours for the Welfare of Church and State. Which as it is our duty, so I think, it must be the delight of every grateful Mind under the mild Government of his present Majesty.

I shall insist no longer upon the particulars of our Duty, but only beg leave to add a Word by

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Way

† 1 Tim. vi. 12. § Mat. xx. 1, &c. ¶ Heb. xii. 1. || 2 Pet. i. 5. † 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Way of Application. And here my Brethren, let me earnestly press you to think of these Things seriously, for they are indeed of the utmost Importance. Our Life, the eternal Life of our Soul is here concerned.

Let us therefore try and examine ourselves, Is this a true, tho' imperfect Draught of the *pastoral Charge*? Are we all called to be, and do what is here described? And have we been faithful to our Trust? What Account can we give to *the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls* § of the Flock committed to our Care.

In what Manner came we prepared to the Ministry? had we experienced in our own Souls that Power of *Godliness* † which we were to preach to others? Or were we strangers to this *Life of God* * in the Soul, knowing no more of Christianity than the Form and Outside, a regular Behaviour and decent Conduct?

If so—This was indeed to come blind *Leaders of the blind* ‡, to teach what we knew not ourselves. For as a Fountain can rise no higher than its Source, so can a Minister heartily and effectually preach no more of Christ than he has experienc'd in his own Soul.

And with what Views (let us not deceive ourselves, for *God is not mocked* †) took we upon us this Ministration? Were they the same as led others to chuse another Way of Life? Did we do it for the sake of a Maintenance? To qualify ourselves to receive the Income of a Personage, or was our Motive an earnest desire to save immortal Souls, fully convinced that it was God's Will that we should thus dedicate ourselves to his Service?

Could we with Truth profess, we were persuaded that we were moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon us this Office and Ministration, without putting

§ 1 Pet. ii. 25 † 2 Tim. iii. 5. * Eph. iv. 18.
‡ Mat. xv. 14. † Gal. vi. 7.

ring any forced Sense upon the Words, different from their plain meaning? If not—this was indeed a sad Beginning. How can we hope for any Success in our Ministry, if we came into it by means of a solemn lye, confirmed by receiving the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of *Christ*? Which was in fact a solemn Ratification of the Truth of this, and our other Declarations.

If our Hearts condemn any of us in this, my brethren, let us not endeavour to evade or forget so great a Crime. Let us not hide our *Iniquity in our Bosom* ||; but be deeply humbled before the Lord. Who knows but even this will be washed away in the Blood of the *Lamb*? It doubtless will, if we draw unto him by Faith; and we now at last begin to be really and properly the Ministers of the Lord *Jesus Christ*.

Let us search farther into our Hearts. Have we been faithful in the Discharge of the *particular Duties* of our Office? Have we done them not of Force nor of Necessity, but of a willing mind? Have we delighted in the work, and laboured abundantly in it? Not only because we feared the Censure of Superiors, but having our Eyes towards him who sent us into the Vineyard, and will shortly call us to an Account? Have we strove not to please Men but *God*; hoping as a reward no temporal Advantage, but an eternal Crown of Glory?

In a Word—Have we been *instant in Season, out of Season, preaching the Word, reproofing, rebuking, exhorting, with all long suffering and doctrine* †. *Shewing ourselves approved unto God as Workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth* ‡?

For all this is required of us, as much as of them that first preached the Gospel. We have the same Work, the same Necessity lies upon us, and the same reward or punishment awaits us. For what the

the Lord declares to the Prophet *Ezekiel* is the Tenor of our Commission, and therefore ought deeply to be laid to Heart. *Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel, therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them warning, from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked Man shall die in his Iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand*.*

Above all things, let us strive to shew ourselves examples of what we press others to. Without this our preaching, and all our Endeavours will be in vain. When our Lives contradict our words, Men will be apt to suspect, that we do not ourselves believe what we would persuade them to: At least that we are not convinced that the consequences of an irreligious Life will be so terrible as we represent them. When our conduct is not suitable, they will conclude too that the Words we speak are not our own; or if they come from the Head, that they have no Connection with the Heart.

It is chiefly the bad lives and careless conduct of Ministers, that gives occasion to the impious Reflections, we hear so frequently made upon our holy Religion. Would you take away all pretence for such prophaneness, shew Men by your own Example that Christianity is something more than an outside Appearance: that fills the Heart with a new Principle, and thereby alters and directs the whole Life.

And indeed, I cannot see with what Face we can declare the awful Truths of *God*, if they have not an influence upon our own Conversation. Must we not be ashamed to tell Men that *God's* wrath is revealed against such crimes as we ourselves are guilty of? To reckon up those that shall be banished from the

the presence of God for ever, when our own Name is in the List? How can we press our Hearers to the Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, if we ourselves are apparently sensual; fond of the Delights and Delicacies, running with eager Hearts into the Vanities and Amusements of the Age? How can we exhort them to have their Conversation in Heaven † if our own Hearts are buried in the Earth? Or encourage them to *press towards the Mark of the prize of their high Calling in Christ Jesus* *, if we ourselves are lifeless and Slaves to sloth?

If there is such a manifest difference between what we *say* and *do*, all Men will cry out *Physician heal thy self* ‡. Our Words will pass for nothing. Tho' our Preaching be never so true, our Hearers will consider us only as *acting a Part*; doing what we are obliged to by Profession. And as they see us thus satisfied with barely speaking, this will tempt them to be as content with barely hearing.

But oh! how greatly will this increase our Condemnation, when at the great Day those that were committed to our Care shall charge the loss of their Souls upon our cruel neglect? When the *Lord Jesus* shall require those Souls at our Hands, whom he bought *with his own Blood* ¶, unto whom, instead of Ministers of *Christ*, we became *Factors* for Satan. Surely such Shepherds will be made to drink the very Dregs of the Cup of *God's Wrath*; which ought greatly to alarm our Fears at the same, that our Hopes shall be quickned by that blessed Promise, *They that turn many to Righteousness shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever* §.

I cannot conclude without a Word to the rest of this Congregation.

You have heard the particulars of the ministerial Office: You have seen its exceeding great difficulty and

† *Phil.* iii. 20. * *Ibid.* v. 14. ‡ *Luke* vi. 23.
¶ *1 Pet.* i. 19. § *Dan.* xii. 3.

and danger, it lies upon you therefore not to weaken our hands, but strengthen them, not to discourage, but assist us in the important Work. And in order thereto, both by our Example and Authority, inforce the Practice of these things which we preach and persuade.

Some of you are particularly obliged to this: Churchwardens and Sidesmen are to watch over their Parishioners, and the Oath of God is upon them: So that they cannot without incurring the horrid Sin of wilful perjury, neglect to present the openly irregular and obnoxious, that they may be properly punished, and if obstinate, separated from the Flock, lest they should infect the rest.

And indeed the Salvation of Souls does not belong to Ministers only. All Christians are obliged in their Station to endeavour to promote this great End. *How knowest thou, O wife, but thou shalt save thy Husband? How knowest thou, O Husband, but thou shalt save thy Wife †? How knowest thou, O Sister, but thou shalt save thy Brother? A Word in Season to a Friend or Acquaintance, joined to a sweet obliging, exemplary Behaviour, may by God's Blessing, make a great Impression.*

But if you will not help us, at least do not hinder us: Would you have us good Shepherds, be yourselves good Sheep. Not crooked and perverse, but gentle and compliable. Do not disappoint our good Attempts, by secretly traducing, or openly opposing us therein. When you slander a Minister, you are not only guilty of evil speaking, but you lessen his Ability to promote the Work to which he is called. Indeed if we have great repeated Vices, we desire not to have them concealed nor excused, but if we have Infirmities, shew your Christian Charity by covering them, or by gentle Admonition, and we promise to thank you for your love.

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Above all, deny us not the Assistance of your prayers These when fervent and effectual, and arising from a religious Soul avail much *. Pray therefore for us, and Blessing on our Work. Join Heart in Hand with us in discouraging every evil Work, and promoting the saving Knowledge of *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent †*. And then we need not doubt but *he that soweth, and he that reapeth, shall rejoice in everlasting Glory ‡*. Amen.

* James v. 16. † John xvii. 3. ‡ John iv. 36.

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